CNS Handbook 2019
Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists℠
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Application Questions: Applications@NutritionSpecialists.org

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About the CNS Handbook

Introduction

The CNS Handbook provides information essential to the certification process from application, through examination and recertification.

About the Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists (BCNS)

The Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists (BCNS), established in 1993, is the certifying body for the Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS), and the Certified Nutrition Specialist-Scholar (CNS-S) credentials.

The purpose of the BCNS is to serve the public by establishing and enforcing standards for certification, recertification and the Code of Ethics and by issuing credentials to individuals who meet these standards. Certification programs offered by the BCNS are developed and administered in compliance with nationally accepted accreditation standards for certification programs.

BCNS Mission

The BCNS mission is to advance human health through the science and practice of professional nutrition care. Certified Nutrition Specialist professionals are on the front lines using medical nutrition therapy to battle the epidemic of obesity and chronic disease, and the BCNS supports these efforts and certifies nutrition professionals that maintain the highest standard of nutrition competence.

BCNS Board of Directors

The BCNS Board of Directors ("Board") was established to promote the highest standards of professional nutrition care practice through the development, implementation, coordination and evaluation of all aspects of the certification and certification recertification processes.

The Board is solely responsible for essential decisions related to the development, administration and ongoing maintenance of the BCNS certification programs. The Board ensures that all application and eligibility requirements, examination development and administration, recertification requirements and all certification program policies and procedures, are directly related to the purpose of the certification programs.

BCNS Credentials Council

The credentials council is responsible for the development of the BCNS eligibility requirements, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, and for the evaluation and authorization of all CNS/CNS-S certification applications. All decisions made by the Board of Directors are final.
Consultants

BCNS contracts with independent psychometric consultants to assist in the development, administration, scoring, score reporting and analysis of the Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) and the Certified Nutrition Specialist–Scholar (CNS-S) certification programs.

BCNS Examination Development Committee

The examination development committee responsibilities are cyclical and include the development of content, review of content relevancy, and evaluation of performance data and expertise with the establishment of the passing standard for the examination.

BCNS Examination Development Process

The Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists ensures the validity, reliability and legal defensibility of the Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) and the Certified Nutrition Specialist–Scholar (CNS-S) certification programs. The examination is an assessment instrument that measures the competency of potential candidates against a body of knowledge, skills and abilities designed to demonstrate the depth of knowledge appropriate for effective practice in the nutrition profession.

The content of the BCNS examination is based on the outcomes of a job analysis study. A job analysis is a comprehensive definition of the tasks performed by professionals currently holding the CNS or CNS-S credential. The purpose of the job analysis is to describe, in specific terms, the precise nature of the tasks performed by incumbent professionals who work in the field of nutrition for which the examination is being developed. Job analyses are conducted every 5-7 years, or more often as circumstances may warrant, in order to verify the content of the examination. The results of the job analysis influence to what extent the competencies are revised for the BCNS certification examination.

The BCNS examination is based on an explicit set of competencies determined by the job analysis study conducted on practitioners. The competencies are grouped into domains, subdomains and tasks. As the BCNS examination may only assess knowledge pertaining to these competency statements, they serve as the outline, or blueprint for the examination. The content outline is published on the BCNS website.

The examination specifications are established or revised at the same time as the development of the examination blueprint. The specifications include the total number of test items, test item type(s), total test duration and scoring methodology. The examination blueprint and specifications are based on the outcome of the job analysis study and are reviewed and approved by a panel of subject matter experts.

All examination items (or questions) are directly linked to the approved examination specifications, and are written and reviewed by panels of trained subject matter experts. The examination development council, working with the psychometric consultant, regularly reviews items and approves the examinations.
About the Certified Nutrition Specialist® (CNS®) Credential

Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS)

The CNS designation demonstrates to colleagues, clients, employers and the public at large that certified individuals have the knowledge and proficiency required of the professional nutrition practice. BCNS has established qualifying pathways for Nutritionists and other advanced-degreed health professionals including APRNs, DCs, DDSs, NDs, PAs, PharmDs, MDs, and DOs who wish to demonstrate competence as advanced clinical nutrition professionals and/or obtain a potential pathway to state licensure for nutrition practice and Medical Nutrition Therapy. The Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) is formal recognition for nutrition professionals who have met rigorous and demanding eligibility requirements, including postgraduate education, subsequent supervised practice in professional nutrition and demonstration of a depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate for effective practice in the profession of nutrition.

Eligibility Requirements

BCNS has developed requirements for eligibility to ensure that the application process is fair and impartial for all applicants. Each eligibility requirement has been established to ensure that individuals certified by BCNS have an acceptable level of knowledge and proficiency needed to provide nutrition care services at a mastery level. A combination of both work experience and demonstrated knowledge are essential for individuals earning the CNS credential.

Examination Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to sit for the BCNS examination, CNS candidates must fulfill both the academic and educational requirements as outlined below:

Degree Requirement

- Master of science or doctoral degree in a field of nutrition or a related field (including, but not limited to: Public Health, Health Science, Biochemistry, Nursing, Physician’s Assistant) from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent; or
- Doctoral degree in a field of clinical healthcare (including, but not limited to: MD, DO, DC, DDS, Doctor of Nursing, ND, PharmD) from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent.

*Regionally accredited* means an institution that was accredited, at the time the degree was awarded, by a regional accreditation body in the United States which is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education.

Degrees from institutions outside the U.S. must be from that country’s equivalent of a regionally accredited U.S. institution.

Coursework Requirement for Nutritionists and Other Advanced-Degreed Healthcare Professionals

All coursework must be from regionally accredited institutions. The academic requirement listed is a minimum, for-credit coursework of 35 semester credit hours in the following categories:
Graduate Nutrition Courses [12 hours of graduate semester credits required*]
Examples include but are not limited to:
  • Developmental nutrition
  • Metabolism of vitamins & minerals
  • Micro/macronutrients
  • Nutrition assessment
  • Therapeutic nutrition
  • Endocrine system therapeutics
  • Botanical medicine

*This requirement applies to candidates taking the CNS exam in June, 2022 or after. Nine (9) semester credit hours are required for candidates taking the exam prior to the June 2022 exam.

Biochemistry [6 semester credit hours]
Examples include but are not limited to:
  • Biochemistry of nutrition
  • Clinical biochemistry
  • Medical biochemistry

Physiology or Anatomy [3 semester credit hours]
Examples include but are not limited to:
  • Anatomy and physiology I, II
  • Anatomy
  • Medical physiology
  • Physiology
  • Health and wellness physiology I

Clinical or Life Sciences Courses [12 semester credit hours]
May be prerequisites for the above courses and include, but are not limited to:
  • Biology
  • Botany
  • Microbiology
  • Nutrition science
  • Organic/inorganic chemistry

Behavioral Science Course [2 semester credit hours or 30 continuing education units* of undergraduate or graduate credit]
Examples include but are not limited to:
  • Motivational Interviewing
  • Psychology
  • Motivational Counseling
  • Principles and Practices of Health Behavior and Self-Care
  • Foundations of Health Behavior and Health Education

*This requirement applies to candidates taking the CNS exam in June, 2022 or after.
Coursework Requirements for MDs and DOs

Graduate Nutrition Science Courses (12 hours of graduate semester credits or 180 CE equivalents)

Two categories of nutrition coursework are required:

➢ **Category 1 — Foundational Nutrition (Min. of 4 graduate level semester credit hours or 60 CE equivalents)**

   Must address CNS Foundational Nutrition Coursework Topics which include: nutritional biochemistry, developmental nutrition, energy balance and caloric values of foods, body composition and regulation of metabolism, metabolism and function of nutrients, macro-and micronutrient sources and quality, bioactive components in foods, nutrient requirements.

➢ **Category 2 — Advanced Nutrition (Min. of 8 graduate level semester credit hours or 120 CE equivalents)**

   Examples of courses include but are not limited to: Nutritional Therapeutics, Nutrition Assessment, Functional Medicine Nutrition, Pharmacology and Drug-Nutrient Interactions, Functional Medicine for Autoimmune Diseases, Nutrition and Digestive Health.

**Biochemistry [6 semester credit hours]**

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Biochemistry of Nutrition
- Clinical Biochemistry
- Medical Biochemistry

**Physiology or Anatomy [3 semester credit hours]**

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Anatomy and Physiology I, II
- Anatomy
- Medical Physiology
- Physiology
- Health and Wellness Physiology

**Clinical or Life Sciences Courses [12 semester credit hours]**

May be prerequisites for the above courses and include, but are not limited to:

- Biology
- Botany
- Microbiology
- Nutrition Science
- Organic/Inorganic Chemistry

**Transcript Requirement**

Official school transcripts for coursework and the conferring of the master of science or the doctoral degree, or its foreign equivalent, and all mandatory coursework are required.

Applicants must arrange for the submission of the transcripts from the institution(s) directly to the BCNS. Examination eligibility will not be conferred without receipt of official transcripts.

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License Requirement
Applicants with doctoral degrees in a field of clinical healthcare must provide the BCNS proof of their applicable professional license for verification.

Curriculum Vitae/Resume Requirement
Applicants must submit a recent curriculum vitae or resume detailing professional experience as a nutritionist.

Letters of Recommendation Requirement
Ensure submission of two letters of recommendation from healthcare professionals familiar with your work in the field of nutrition in accordance with the following guidelines:

- On organization/entity letterhead
- Indicate the relationship with the applicant. Letters may not be from a spouse or relative.
- Describe type of work witnessed and performed to provide enough depth to allow the BCNS credentials council insight into the applicant’s character, experience, abilities and commitment to the field of nutrition
- Sent via email to Applications@NutritionSpecialists.org

Photograph Requirement
All applicants are required to submit a current photograph as part of the application process to sit for the examination. The photograph should not exceed six inches in width or height. The BCNS will use the photograph for identification purposes only; the photograph will not be distributed or used for any external purposes without written consent by the applicant.

CNS Credential Eligibility Criteria

CNS Supervised Practice Experience Requirement for Nutritionists and Other Advanced-Degreed Healthcare Professionals

1. Satisfactory completion of the CNS supervised practice experience is essential to being awarded the CNS credential. The program is structured to ensure each candidate obtains the in-depth knowledge and skills expected of an advanced-level nutrition professional, while maintaining the flexibility required to achieve individual career goals. As such, candidates are responsible for tailoring their own supervised experience based on all program requirements outlined herein, and for locating supervisors that meet the qualifications listed below.

2. Although the supervised experience program may be completed after passing the BCNS certifying examination, the CNS credential will not be awarded until the BCNS credentials council has approved the experience. It is worth noting that some evidence shows that those with experience perform better on the examination than those without.

3. The CNS supervised practice experience consists of 1,000 hours of supervised practice experience in clinical nutrition care in the following nutrition categories and in accordance with CNS Supervised Practice Experience Competencies:
   - Category A—Nutrition assessment (minimum 200 hours).
   - Category B—Nutrition intervention, education, counseling or management (minimum 200 hours).
   - Category C—Nutrition monitoring or evaluation (minimum 200 hours).
   - Remaining hours may be in any of the above categories.
4. The supervised experience may be obtained entirely or partly from:
   - Practicum as part of a master’s or doctoral degree program
   - Internship, residency or clinical rotation
   - Clinical practice
   - Community setting
   - Institutional setting
   - Home health care setting
The supervised experience may not be obtained from retail stores.

5. The 1,000 hours may come from multiple venues and supervisors. Supervisors may supervise a candidate in multiple settings. Each supervisor must meet the eligibility requirements and be approved by the BCNS.

6. To be eligible, all supervised experience must be gained after the candidate matriculates from the qualifying degree program.

7. Up to 250 hours may be "observational". Examples include a virtual clinic, sitting in on a consultation conducted by another practitioner or shadowing a supervisor.

8. The supervised experience of candidates who have had significant practice experience prior to applying for the CNS credential will be evaluated on an individual basis.

**Supervisor Qualifications**

Supervisors must meet both of the following criteria:
Must have a minimum of three full-time years of clinical experience in nutrition care;
Must be at least one of the following:
   - Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) in good standing; or
   - Master of science or doctoral degree in a field of nutrition; or
   - Licensed M.D./D.O. with didactic training or education and experience in clinical nutrition as documented by 75 CE credits or the equivalent (without exception); or
   - Doctoral-level health professional (e.g., D.C., N.D., Pharm.D.) who meets curriculum eligibility requirements for CNS and who can legally provide nutrition services in the state of practice. DCs must also hold an N.S., Nutrition.

**Additional Requirements for Supervisors**

- The above eligibility requirements apply to all supervisors, including faculty of a degree program offering practicum or internship.
- A regionally accredited institution must have awarded the supervisor’s qualifying degree.
- Licensed or certified nutritionists or dietitians are not eligible as supervisors unless they also hold a master’s or doctoral degree in the field of nutrition.
- Approved supervisors may supervise multiple candidates on an ongoing basis.
- Supervisors are approved for a three-year period and then must re-apply for eligibility.
- Supervisors may not be married to, related to, or domestic partners with supervisee(s).
Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Supervisors are responsible for completing the CNS Practice Experience Supervisor Approval Application and submitting it to the BCNS along with a current CV for approval.

2. Supervisors are responsible for assisting each candidate in tailoring an experience that meets the CNS Supervised Practice Experience Requirements, CNS Supervised Practice Experience Competencies and the candidate’s career goals.

3. Each supervisor is responsible for holding regularly scheduled sessions with the candidate. Meetings may be held in-person or remotely.

4. Each supervisor is responsible for verifying the completion of the hours reported on the CNS Supervised Practice Experience Candidate’s Report, rating the candidate’s performance in each of the designated competency categories and submitting the CNS Supervised Practice Experience Supervisor’s Report for approval by the BCNS credentials council.

5. Each supervisor is responsible for reviewing and approving each of the 5 Personalized Nutrition Case Study reports completed by the candidate.

It is expected that holding regularly scheduled sessions with the candidate will allow supervisors to identify competency areas that require improvement on an ongoing basis so any deficiencies may be adequately addressed during the supervised practice experience.

Candidate Responsibilities

1. Each candidate is responsible for locating the setting(s) for the experience and qualified supervisor(s), and for working with the supervisor(s) to tailor the experience in accordance with CNS Supervised Practice Experience Requirements and CNS Supervised Practice Experience Competencies.

2. Each candidate is responsible for ensuring the completion and submission of the CNS Supervised Practice Experience Supervisor Approval Application for each supervisor. NOTE: Supervisors must meet the BCNS requirements and be approved by the BCNS. Failure to comply may result in hours not being accepted.

3. Each candidate is responsible for completing 5 BCNS Personalized Nutrition Case Study reports and reviewing them with their supervisor.

4. Each CNS candidate must document and attest to the completion of 1,000 hours by submitting the following documentation:
   - CNS Supervised Practice Experience Candidate’s Report
   - CNS Tracking Tool

5. State licensure requirements for supervised experience vary from state to state. The BCNS strongly recommend each candidate review the current licensing laws in the state they intend to practice in before beginning the supervised experience to determine if the supervised experience meets state licensing and record-keeping requirements. The BCNS approval of a supervised experience does not currently guarantee approval in all states. In addition to language naming accepted qualifications of supervisors, language which states a supervisor can be a licensed health professional “with nutrition in their scope of practice” requires you to investigate whether a specific professional has nutrition in their scope of practice in the state in which they practice. (Refer to www.NutritionAdvocacy.org for information about state requirements.)
Relevant Documents

- CNS Supervised Practice Experience Handbook
- CNS Supervised Practice Experience Supervisor Approval Application
- CNS Supervised Practice Experience Supervisor’s Report
- CNS Supervised Practice Experience Candidate’s Report
- CNS Supervised Practice Experience Personalized Nutrition Case Study Report
- CNS Supervised Practice Experience Tracking Tool

CNS Practice Experience Requirements for MDs and DOs

Experience must be completed after academic requirements have been met or while they are in progress. Candidates are responsible for 1,000 hours clinical nutrition practice experience achieved in clinical practice or as part of fellowship and residency, as defined by the following:

- Completion of 1,000 documented hours of clinical nutrition experience in the following categories:
  - Nutrition Assessment (200 hours)
  - Nutrition Intervention, Education, Counseling, and Management (200 hours)
  - Nutrition Monitoring and Evaluation (200 hours)
  - Remaining 400 hours in any of the above categories or a combination

 Submission of 3 Personalized Nutrition Case Study Reports in accordance with specified format, requiring approval by the Credentials Council.

Experience may be obtained through:

- Residency or fellowship in clinical nutrition or part of training in a related subspecialty that incorporates nutrition. Examples may include gastroenterology, endocrinology, critical care, nephrology, cardiology, or others, and/or
- Clinical practice

Relevant Documents

- CNS Foundational Nutrition Coursework Topics
- Eligible Nutrition Courses for MD/DOs
- CNS Practice Experience Competencies for MD/DOs
- CNS Practice Experience for MD/DOs Personalized Nutrition Case Study Report
- CNS Practice Experience Candidate’s Report for MD/DOs
About the Certified Nutrition Specialist – Scholar® (CNS-S®) Credential

Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS-S)

The CNS-S℠ designation demonstrates to colleagues, clients, employers and the public at large that certified individuals have the knowledge and proficiency required of the professional nutrition practice. BCNS has established qualifying pathways for scholars, researchers, educators, product developers or scientists seeking distinction in the field of nutrition science. The Certified Nutrition Specialist-Scholar (CNS-S) is formal recognition for nutrition professionals who have met rigorous and demanding eligibility requirements, including postgraduate educations, subsequent experience in the nutrition industry, research, academia, or writing, and demonstration of authored nutrition papers, texts, research, and patents.

Eligibility Requirements

The BCNS has developed requirements for eligibility to ensure the application process is fair and impartial for all applicants. Each requirement has been established to ensure that individuals certified by the BCNS have a level of knowledge and proficiency needed to provide nutrition care services at a mastery level. A combination of both work experience and demonstrated knowledge are essential for individuals earning the CNS-S credential.

Examination Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to sit for the BCNS examination, CNS-S candidates must fulfill both the academic and educational requirements as outlined below:

Coursework Requirement

All coursework must be from regionally accredited institutions. The academic requirement listed is a minimum, for-credit coursework of 35 semester credit hours in the following categories:

Graduate Nutrition Courses [12 hours of graduate semester credits required]*

Examples include but are not limited to:
- Developmental nutrition
- Metabolism of vitamins & minerals
- Micro/macro nutrients
- Nutrition assessment
- Therapeutic nutrition
- Endocrine system therapeutics
- Botanical medicine

*This requirement applies to candidates taking the CNS exam in June, 2022 or after. Nine (9) semester credit hours are required for candidates taking the exam prior to the June 2022 exam.

Biochemistry [6 semester credit hours]

Examples include but are not limited to:
- Biochemistry of nutrition
- Clinical biochemistry
- Medical biochemistry

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Physiology or Anatomy [3 semester credit hours]
Examples include but are not limited to:
- Anatomy and physiology I,II
- Anatomy
- Medical physiology
- Physiology
- Health and wellness physiology I

Clinical or Life Sciences Courses [12 semester credit hours]
May be prerequisites for the above courses and include, but are not limited to:
- Biology
- Botany
- Microbiology
- Nutrition science
- Organic/inorganic chemistry

Behavioral Science Course [2 semester credit hours or 30 continuing education units* of undergraduate or graduate credit]
Examples include but are not limited to:
- Motivational Interviewing
- Psychology
- Motivational Counseling
- Principles and Practices of Health Behavior and Self-Care
- Foundations of Health Behavior and Health Education
*This requirement applies to candidates taking the CNS exam in June, 2022 or after.

Degree Requirement
1. Doctoral degree in nutrition or related field from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent; or
2. Doctoral degree in a field of clinical healthcare (including, but not limited to, MD, DO, DC, DDS, Doctor of Nursing, ND, Pharm.D) from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent.

"Regionally accredited" means an institution that was accredited, at the time the degree was awarded, by a regional accreditation body in the United States which is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education.

Degrees from institutions outside the U.S. must be from that country’s equivalent of a regionally accredited U.S. institution.

Transcript Requirement
Official school transcripts for coursework and the conferring of the doctoral degree and all mandatory coursework are required.

Applicants must arrange for the submission of the transcripts from the institution(s) directly to the BCNS. Examination eligibility will not be conferred without receipt of official transcripts.
License (Optional)
Applicants must provide the BCNS proof of their applicable professional license for verification.

Curriculum Vitae/Resume Requirement
Applicants must submit a recent curriculum vitae or resume detailing professional experience.

Letters of Recommendation Requirement
Ensure submission of two letters of recommendation from health care professionals familiar with the candidates work as a nutrition professional in accordance with the following guidelines:
   a. On organization/entity letterhead
   b. Indicate the relationship with the applicant. Letters may not be from a spouse or relative.
   c. Describe type of work witnessed and performed to provide enough depth to allow the BCNS credentials council insight into the applicant’s character, experience, abilities and commitment to the field of nutrition
   d. Sent via email to Applications@NutritionSpecialists.org

Photograph Requirement
All applicants are required to submit a current photograph as part of the application process to sit for the examination. The photograph should not exceed six inches in width or height. BCNS will use the photograph for identification purposes only; the photograph will not be distributed or used for any external purposes without written consent by the applicant.

CNS-S Credential Eligibility Criteria

CNS-S Experience Requirement
The CNS-S candidate must demonstrate evidence of experience in nutrition in accordance with the following:

Documentation of a minimum of the equivalent of three years’ experience in any one or more of the following categories:
   a. Nutrition industry
   b. Research
   c. Academia
   d. Writing
   e. Clinical practice

CNS-S Scholarship Requirement
The CNS-S candidate must demonstrate evidence of scholarship in nutrition in accordance with the following:

Documentation of a minimum of five of any combination of the following:
   a. Nutrition papers in peer-reviewed journals or trade journals
   b. Nutrition chapters in textbooks or reference books
   c. Non-professional nutrition books that are based on sufficient scientific research
   d. Nutrition-related patents
   e. Comparable works of scholarship
Eligibility Rationale

Each eligibility requirement has been established to ensure that individuals certified by BCNS have an acceptable level of knowledge and skill needed to demonstrate nutrition-specific competency and a commitment to client and patient safety in varied settings.

Candidates are required to pass the examination to demonstrate that their education, experience, and/or training have resulted in sufficient understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to provide safe and competent evidence-based nutrition services as determined by the job analysis studies and represented on the examination detailed outline.

Each eligibility requirement has been selected to support the purpose of the credential:

Education

Minimal educational requirements have been established for certification eligibility to address the depth and breadth of knowledge and skill required to achieve competency to provide nutrition science services in a safe and effective manner.

Experience

Minimal supervised practice requirements have been established for certification eligibility to address the depth and breadth of knowledge application and skill required to achieve competent nutrition practice.

Ethics

BCNS certificants and candidates have the obligation to: maintain high standards of integrity and professional conduct; accept responsibility for their actions; continually seek to enhance their professional capabilities; practice with fairness and honesty; and, encourage others to act in a professional manner, consistent with the certification standards and responsibilities set forth in the Code of Ethics. All candidates and certificants are required to agree and adhere to an enforceable to Code of Ethics as a condition of certification.

Examination

Candidates are required to pass the examination to demonstrate that their education, experience, and training have resulted in a mastery of understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to provide safe and competent evidence-based nutrition science services as determined by the job analysis studies and represented on the examination detailed outline.
Applying for Certification

Before submitting an application, carefully review the information contained in this Handbook. Taking the certification examination is voluntary. The BCNS strictly adheres to its eligibility requirements for certification. It is the responsibility of the applicant to comply with all application procedures and deadlines in order to establish eligibility to take the examination.

Application Requirements

To apply for the CNS or CNS-S certification program, the corresponding certification application, appropriate fee and required forms/documentation must be submitted electronically to Applications@NutritionSpecialists.org.

When completing the CNS or CNS-S Certification Application be sure to:
- Ensure the name on the application matches the name on the identification (ID) to be used for admission to the test site (see section on Identification Requirements).
- Sign and date the application in ink.
- Make copies for your records.
- Include the correct application fee by referring to the BCNS website for current examination pricing. Payment may be made online at NutritionSpecialists.org. Let the BCNS know if payment is made with a different name.
- Submit completed applications to Applications@NutritionSpecialists.org.

CNS Certification Application

To earn the CNS designation, applicants must adhere to the following procedures:
- The CNS Exam Application must be submitted for those applicants seeking eligibility to sit for the BCNS examination;
- The Candidate's Report and Tracking Tool may be completed and submitted with the CNS Exam Application if the applicant has fulfilled the Supervised Experience requirement; and
- The Candidate's Report and Tracking Tool may be completed and submitted independently, up to 5 years, after passing of the BCNS examination.

Exam Application

- Completion and submission of the CNS Exam Application and corresponding fee.
- Ensure submission of official school transcripts for coursework and the conferring of the qualifying degree and all mandatory coursework.
- Submission of proof of applicable professional license for verification.
- Submission of a recent curriculum vitae or resume.
- Submission of two (2) letters of recommendations.
- Submission of a current photograph
- Submission of Request for Special Accommodations Form and Documentation of Disability-Related Needs Form (if applicable).

Supervised Practice Experience

1. Completion and submission of the Supervisor Approval Application. NOTE: Supervisors must meet the BCNS requirements and be approved by the BCNS. Failure to comply may result in hours not being accepted.
2. Completion and submission of the Supervisor's Report (submitted by the supervisor).
3. Completion and submission of the Candidate's Report.
4. Completion and submission of the Tracking Tool.
5. Submission of an updated curriculum vitae or resume.
Supervisors

For Nutritionists and other advanced-degreed health professionals, BCNS requires applicants to provide documentation of 1,000 hours of supervised practice experience in defined nutrition categories. BCNS defines a qualified CNS Supervisor as having a minimum of three (3) full-time years of clinical experience in nutrition care and one of the following credentials:

- Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) in good standing
- Masters of Science or Doctoral Degree in a field of nutrition with a state license or certification
- Licensed MD/DO with didactic training or education and experience in clinical nutrition as documented by 75 CE credits or the equivalent (without exception);
  Or
- Doctoral-level health professional (e.g., DC, ND, PharmD) who meets curriculum eligibility requirements for CNS and who can legally provide nutrition services in the state of practice. DCs must also hold an MS, Nutrition.

NOTE: Supervisors may not be married to, related to, or domestic partners with the supervisee(s).

For MD/DOs, BCNS requires applicants to provide documentation of 1,000 hours clinical nutrition practice experience achieved in clinical practice or as part of a fellowship or residency. Applicants are also required to submit three (3) Personalized Nutrition Case Study Reports.

Candidates must ensure that the Supervisor submits the completed Supervisor Approval Application to BCNS. Failure to comply may result in hours not being accepted.

CNS-S Certification Application

The CNS-S Certification Application is required of any applicant seeking eligibility to sit for the BCNS examination.

CNS-S Application Submission Requirements

- Completion and submission of the CNS-S Scholar Application and corresponding fee.
- Submission of official school transcripts for coursework of the conferring of the doctoral degree, or its foreign equivalent, and all mandatory coursework.
- Submission of proof of the applicant’s applicable professional license for verification.
- Submission of a recent curriculum vitae or resume.
- Ensures submission of two letters of recommendation from health care professionals.
- Submission of a current photograph.
- Submission of Request for Special Accommodations Form and Documentation of Disability-Related Needs Form (if applicable).
- Completion and submission of the evidence of three years’ experience.
- Completion and submission of the evidence of five works of scholarship.
BCNS Examination Dates, Deadlines and Fees

Examination Dates

The Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists offers bi-annual testing in various locations throughout the United States. Current examination dates and corresponding application deadlines are published on the BCNS website.

Examination Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification Application Processing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Non-refundable CNS/CNS-S exam application processing fee: $50</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Non-refundable CNS Supervised Practice Experience application processing fee*: $50</td>
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</tbody>
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*if sent separately from the exam application

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<tr>
<th>Examination</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- BCNS examination registration fee (1st Time Applicant Only): $300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Re-testing BCNS examination registration fee: $200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Complete Applications

Upon receipt of the CNS/CNS-S certification application and the required supporting materials and fees, the credentials council will begin the evaluation process to determine applicant eligibility. Applicants are notified by email of their eligibility status to sit for the BCNS examination—the examination fee is due within seven calendar days of this notification. An official letter with examination instructions, location, date, time, and proctor contact information is sent via email approximately 30 days prior to the examination date.

Incomplete and Late Applications

Application forms, fees and all supporting materials must be received by BCNS no later than the published application deadline, without exception. The Supervised Practice Experience portion of the CNS certification application and all required materials must be received by the BCNS no later than five years from the candidate’s passing testing date.

An application will be considered incomplete if any of the requested information is missing, illegible or the appropriate fee has not been paid.

Candidates whose applications have been internally reviewed and deemed incomplete or ineligible will be notified via email. Candidates will be notified of the application’s deficiencies and possible remedies. If the candidate does not respond or rectify the noted deficiencies prior to the published deadline, the application cannot be processed.
Certification Application Audits

The submission of an application indicates a candidate’s agreement to comply with the terms of the audit process. All applications are subject to an audit, although only a percentage of applications are selected for an audit. The selection of an application for audit is random.

Candidates may be asked to provide any documentation or material substantiating eligibility. BCNS will provide audited candidates with a reasonable window of time to submit the requested documentation. Upon receipt of the requested documentation, candidates will receive an audit status notification via email within seven business days. Candidates failing to meet the audit requirements will receive a refund of their examination fee minus an administrative fee of $50.

Eligibility Appeals

A candidate whose eligibility has been denied by the BCNS may appeal the decision to the BCNS Executive Administrator within 30 calendar days after notification of the adverse decision. The candidate must submit the appeal in writing (email is acceptable), and explain in detail: 1) The nature of the request and the specific facts and circumstances supporting the request, and 2) all reasons why the action or decision should be changed or modified. The candidate must also provide accurate copies of all supporting documents. Eligibility appeals will be reviewed by the BCNS Executive Administrator and responded to in writing within 15 business days of the postmarked appeal request letter.

If the BCNS Executive Administrator cannot resolve the issue, the appeal will be referred to the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

Fairness and Discrimination

BCNS adheres to principles of fairness and due process and endorses the principles of equal opportunity. In administering the certification programs, BCNS does not discriminate or deny opportunity to anyone on the basis of race, color, creed, age, gender, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, parental status, ancestry, sexual orientation, military discharge status, source of income, or any other status protected by applicable law. All candidates for certification will be judged solely on the published eligibility criteria determined by the Board.
Scheduling the Examination

Examination Administrations

The Executive Administrator is responsible for ensuring the security of examination content at all times. The examination is administered only at secure and standardized test sites to ensure a fair and consistent testing experience for all candidates and to ensure that the examination results for all candidates are earned under comparable conditions and represent fair and accurate measurement via a standardized testing environment.

Examinations are administered in a paper and pencil format at various locations in the United States from 9 AM to 1 PM local time, once in the spring and once in the fall. Examination dates and corresponding application deadlines are published on the BCNS website.

Assigned Testing Site

The CNS and CNS-S Certification Applications include an examination site information section. Examination sites are tentative and assignment to a specific location cannot be guaranteed, however, applicants select three examination sites, in order of preference.

After applications have been reviewed and evaluated by the credentials council, eligible candidates receive an electronic notification from the BCNS confirming authorization to sit for the examination.

Formal notification including examination instructions, the assigned testing site location, date, time, and proctor contact information is sent via email to all eligible candidates 30 days prior to their examination day. Candidates are required to present their government issued identification to be admitted to the testing center on examination day.

Modifications to Examination Administrations

BCNS reserves the right to cancel or change the administrative date(s) or location(s) of the BCNS examination 45 days prior to the examination.

The Executive Administrator will notify all confirmed candidates in receipt of an authorization to test letter. Candidates may request a full refund or apply application fees toward an unscheduled or upcoming administration.

BCNS is not responsible for expenses incurred by a candidate due to examination administration modifications.

Cancellation Policy

Requests to cancel testing appointments and/or withdraw applications will be honored up until 30 days prior to the examination date. Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing.

If necessary, approved applicants may postpone taking the examination for one examination cycle from their scheduled examination date without penalty or additional fees, provided BCNS is notified in writing at least fourteen days prior to the scheduled examination. After that, previously approved candidates who have not yet taken the examination will be required to re-apply and pay the application fee.

No refunds will be made if the BCNS receives notification with less than 30 days before the examination date.

Candidates who arrive late for the testing appointment will not be seated and must contact the BCNS to be reauthorized to test. Candidates will be required to pay the current examination fee.
Preparing For the Examination

Examination Content and Format

The BCNS paper and pencil examination contains 200 multiple-choice, single answer questions, and will cover the broad spectrum of basic and applied nutritional science. Themes such as fundamental principles on nutrition, nutrients and human health, nutrition assessment, clinical intervention and monitoring, professional issues, epidemiology, biochemistry and integration of these areas, are threaded throughout the examination. Detailed information may be found within the published Examination Content Outline. Candidates have four hours to complete the examination.

Tips for Success

- Read the entire CNS Handbook.
- Familiarize yourself with the BCNS Certification Examination for Nutrition Specialists content outline.
- Read How to Prepare for the Certification Examination for Nutrition Specialists and review the list of recommended readings in this document. Review of nutrition textbooks does not constitute an endorsement by the BCNS nor simply guarantee that candidates will be successful in passing the certification examination.
- Know when and where the test will be given, appear on time with required materials (e.g., valid identification) and be ready to be tested.

The BCNS’ role is in developing and administering certification examinations to determine the qualifications of candidates for certification. The Board does not require, provide, or endorse any specific study guides, training or review courses.

Language

The BCNS examination, as well as all communications from the BCNS, will be in English. Translation services and extended time for language challenges are not available.

Special Testing Accommodations

BCNS complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will provide reasonable and appropriate testing accommodations for candidates with documented disabilities who request and demonstrate the need for accommodation as required by law. BCNS requires verifiable documentation to ensure the individual qualifies under the ADA as a disabled individual, and to allow accommodations to be specifically matched with the identified functional limitation to provide equal access to all testing functions.

The information provided by candidates and any documentation regarding such disability and special accommodation, will be treated with strict confidentiality and will not be shared with any source, with the exception of BCNS authorized testing consultants and proctors, without the candidate’s express written permission.

Candidates requiring special accommodations must complete the Special Accommodations Request form, and the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs form before scheduling the examination. These forms must be submitted with the CNS or CNS-S Certification Application to the BCNS by the deadline posted on the BCNS website. Arrangements for special accommodations may take up to 45 days to coordinate.

Requests for accommodations are reviewed by the Executive Administrator to ensure the request can be processed without jeopardizing the integrity or security of the examination. The Executive Administrator, or staff designee, will personally communicate with the candidate to ensure all processes and procedures are explained and that a testing appointment is scheduled to accommodate their needs accordingly, if feasible.
On Examination Day

Testing Sites

BCNS examinations are administered at testing sites located throughout the United States. Testing sites have been selected to provide accessibility to the most candidates in the most controlled, secure and consistent environments possible. To ensure that examination results for all candidates are earned under comparable conditions and represent fair and accurate measurement, test sites meet the following criteria:

- Examination rooms will be quiet and free of disruption
- Rooms will have adequate and comfortable ventilation, lighting and temperature
- All examination administrations will be monitored by approved proctors
- Entrances/ exits will be monitored/ controlled and working fire exits will be available
- The test site will be ADA compliant
- Candidates will have access to restroom facilities

The BCNS maintains examination administration and security standards that are designed to assure all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

Proctors

All examination administrations are monitored by qualified proctors authorized by BCNS. Proctors at each test site:

- manage candidate sign-in and verify candidate identity
- administer pre-approved ADA accommodations as directed by the Executive Administrator
- administer examination test forms according to BCNS policy and procedures
- ensure all security procedures are met or exceeded
- address any candidate or other test site issues as needed
- report any examination related incidents, irregularities, or security concerns directly and promptly to the Executive Administrator
- ensure quiet, secure, testing environment conducive to candidates having a positive and successful experience

Proctors are not allowed to answer any questions related to the content of the examination.

Check-In Procedures

The BCNS proctors and staff adhere to approved procedures to ensure the testing sites meet the BCNS’ testing criteria. Please review the following information prior to the testing date to ensure familiarity with the check-in procedures. When arriving at the test center, candidates will:

- Arrive approximately 20 minutes prior to the scheduled test administration time. Candidates who arrive more than 15 minutes after the scheduled testing time will not be admitted; additional time will not be given to accommodate late examinees.
- Present a valid form of primary identification.
- Sign a candidate log attesting that they have provided valid identification, agree to keep the contents of the examination confidential and that the BCNS may include names of passing candidates on an online registry.

Individual lockers are not provided for test-takers at the testing sites. A personal belongings storage table will be set up for prohibited items. Valuables should not be brought into testing sites.

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Identification Requirements

To be allowed to test, candidates must present a valid form of primary identification at the testing site. Acceptable forms of primary identification (photograph and signature required) include:

- Government-issued driver’s license
- Passport or passport card
- Permanent resident visa
- Military issued identification card

Unacceptable forms of primary identification (photograph and signature required) include, but are not limited to:

- Birth certificates
- Social security cards
- Student IDs
- Employee IDs
- Marriage certificates

All identification must be valid and must be an original document. Candidates will not be admitted to the examination without proper identification. There will be no refund of the examination fee.

Test Site Restrictions and Misconduct

The following actions by candidates during the examination will constitute misconduct and result in an automatic dismissal from the examination, cancellation of scores and forfeiture of examination fees:

- Failure to adhere to testing site examination restrictions
- Creating a disturbance, being abusive or being otherwise uncooperative
- Bringing restricted materials into the testing area
- Using electronic communication equipment such as cellular phones, PDAs or communicating calculators.
- Gaining unauthorized admission into the examination testing area
- Attempting to take the examination for another individual
- Possessing books, notes, or other resources and study aids
- Attempting to remove, or removing scratch paper from the testing site
- Recording or attempting to record examination questions or making notes
- Giving or receiving help, or being suspected of doing so, during or after the examination
- Eating and smoking
- Prohibited items include but are not limited to: communicating calculators, pagers, cell phones, electronic digital devices (PDAs, watches, etc.), recording or photographic devices, weapons, briefcases, computers or computer bags, and handbags or purses.
- Candidates may NOT discuss test questions, topic areas or scenarios, or possible answers, during or after the test administration, with any other person(s), which includes faculty, other examinees or potential candidates.

Security

To ensure the security of the examination, all test materials are confidential. All proprietary rights in the examinations, including copyrights and trade secrets, are held by the BCNS. In order to protect the integrity of the examinations and to ensure the validity of the scores reported, candidates must adhere to strict guidelines regarding proper conduct in handling copyrighted proprietary examinations. Any attempt to reproduce all or part of the examinations, including, but not limited to, removing materials from the examination room, aiding others by any means in reconstructing any portion of the examinations, selling, distributing, receiving or having unauthorized possession of any portion of the examinations, is strictly prohibited by law. Alleged copyright violations will be investigated, and if warranted, prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. All examination scores may be invalidated in the event of suspected breach.
A candidate can be disqualified from taking or continuing to sit for an examination, or from receiving examination results, or the candidate’s scores might be cancelled, if through proctor observation, statistical analysis, and other evidence that the candidate’s score may not be valid or that the candidate was engaged in collaborative, disruptive, or other unacceptable behavior during the administration of the examination.

Testing Irregularities

Occasionally, testing irregularities occur that affect a group of test takers. Such problems include, without limitation, administrative errors, defective equipment or materials, improper access to test content and/or the unauthorized general availability of test content, as well as, other disruptions of test administrations (for example, natural disasters and other emergencies.) When testing irregularities occur, the Executive Administrator conducts an investigation. Based on this information, the BCNS may direct either not to score the test or to cancel the test score. When it is appropriate to do so, the BCNS will give affected test takers the opportunity to take the test again as soon as possible, without charge. Affected test takers will be notified of the reasons for the cancellation and their options for retaking the test. Any appeal process does not apply to testing irregularities.

After the Examination

Notification of Examination Results

Score reports are issued via email directly to candidates approximately 6-8 weeks after the examination administration. Candidates are encouraged to provide a personal email for score notifications due to privacy. Examination results are not given out by BCNS staff via telephone or fax and results are not released to anyone other than the candidate who took the examination unless written consent is provided by the examinee.

Official score reports will include a pass or fail result, scoring information and general information regarding administrative next steps.

Diagnostic information is provided on score reports for those candidates who were unsuccessful. Diagnostic breakdowns calculated per domain are intended to identify content areas by showing areas of relative strength and weakness. Information is provided to assist the candidate in identifying areas of study for purposes of subsequent examination.

Interpreting Examination Results

A criterion-referenced standard setting process is used to establish the passing point for each examination. This means that each candidate’s performance on the examination is measured against a predetermined standard. Candidates are not graded on a curve and do not compete against each other or against a quota.

The passing points for the exams are established using a panel of qualified subject matter experts who carefully review each examination item to determine the level of knowledge or skill that is expected. The passing point for each examination is established to identify individuals with an acceptable level of knowledge and skill.

Review of Examination Scores

Candidates whose examination scores are below the minimum acceptable passing standard may request, via email, a manual review of their examination score. This request and a $50 re-grading fee must be received no later than two months after the test date. Review of examination scores will be processed and mailed approximately four weeks from the receipt of the request. Review of an examination score result is final.
Validation of Scores

BCNS and the independent psychometric consultants reserve the right to cancel scores if their validity and integrity is compromised. Discrepancies such as misconduct of a candidate may cause a score to be suspect. BCNS and the independent psychometric consultants will investigate the occurrence and may cancel or withhold the examination results if a violation of regulations is found.

Reexamination

Candidates who fail the examination may retake the examination for a $200 reexamination fee. Reexamination requires the completion and submission of the BCNS Reexamination Application with the reexamination fee. Candidates must continue to meet the published eligibility criteria.

Candidates may only take the examination once during the calendar year. The rationale for this reexamination policy is to ensure:

- there are sufficient number of test forms available on an annual basis so a unique test form is provided; and
- examination security and item integrity.

Completion of Program Requirements

Candidates who pass the BCNS examination must successfully fulfill all CNS or CNS-S program requirements within five years from their testing date. Examination results will expire for those candidates who have not met all program requirements within this five-year period, and reexamination will be required.

CNS Program Completion

The CNS credential is conferred and program completion is achieved when the candidate has:

- Successfully passed the BCNS examination;
- A master’s of science or doctoral degree in the field of nutrition from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent, or a doctoral degree in a field of healthcare (including, but not limited to, MD, DO, DC, DDS, Doctor of Nursing, ND, Pharm.D) from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent;
- Met all required minimum coursework (35 semester credit hours);
- Completed 1,000 hours of documented and attested practice experience in nutrition;
- Attested that he/she has never been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, no contest to a felony, or of any fraud, false statements, or omissions, wrongful taking of property, bribery, perjury, forgery or a conspiracy to commit any of these offenses;
- Attested to comply with the BCNS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and continuing education standards as set forth by the Board of Directors; and
- Conformed to all application procedures.
CNS-S Program Completion

- The CNS-S credential is conferred and program completion is achieved when the candidate has:
- Successfully passed the BCNS examination;
- A doctoral degree in the field of nutrition from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent; or a Doctoral degree in a field of healthcare (including, but not limited to, MD, DO, DC, DDS, Doctor of Nursing, ND, PharmD) from a United States regionally accredited college or university, or its foreign equivalent;
- Met all required minimum coursework (35 semester credits)
- Completed a minimum of three years’ experience in the nutrition industry, research, academia, writing or clinical practice;
- A minimum of five of any combination of the following:
  - Nutrition papers in peer-reviewed journals or trade journals;
  - Nutrition chapters in textbooks or reference books;
  - Non-professional nutrition books that are based on sufficient scientific research;
  - Nutrition-related patents, or
  - Comparable works of scholarship
- Attested that he/she has never been convicted of, pleaded guilty or no contest to a felony, or of any fraud, false statements, or omissions, wrongful taking of property, bribery, perjury, forgery or a conspiracy to commit any of these offenses;
- Attested to comply with the BCNS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and continuing education standards as set forth by the Board of Directors; and
- Conformed to all application procedures.

Certificates

Candidates who complete their CNS/CNS-S candidacy will receive a non-transferable certificate specifying that the CNS or CNS-S designation has been awarded. Official certificates specifying that the CNS or CNS-S designation has been awarded are sent within 2 weeks of official notification. The candidate’s name will appear on the certificate exactly as requested on the application, with appropriate credentials.

Each CNS and CNS-S receives a certificate that includes:
- the certificants name
- certification type
- date of initial certification
- certificant number
- BCNS Board President’s signature
- expiration date

Credential Verification

The Executive Administrator maintains a database of all active applicants and certificants. The names and credentials of BCNS-certified individuals and their certification status are not considered confidential and may be published by BCNS for verification purposes. Written verification of credentialed status may be obtained by providing the certificant name via email to the BCNS certification staff. Only the certification status may be shared. No other data may be shared without written permission from the credentialed practitioner. Verification of certification status will include the certificant’s name, current certification status and credential(s).

Employers, potential employers or other agencies may request verification of a certificant or a certificant may request that verification be sent to an employer, potential employer or agency. Certification status for any individual may be verified by contacting the BCNS at Office@NutritionSpecialists.org.
Examination Appeals

Complaints or appeals may be submitted in writing prior to the examination and up until 30 days after examination administration. Written appeals must be submitted with supporting documentation or evidence to the BCNS Executive Administrator. The burden of proof for examination appeals is borne by the applicant. The decision of the Board of Directors is final. Complaints or appeals will not be considered after the 30 days have expired.

Due to the thorough review and analysis of each question during the examination construction procedures, there are no appeal procedures to challenge individual examination questions or answers. Because of the secure nature of these examinations, BCNS will not disclose examination questions prior to, or after, the administration. Candidate responses to particular test questions (correct or not correct) will not be disclosed.
Disciplinary and Complaints Policy

Information regarding the complaint process will be available to the public via the BCNS website or other published documents.

In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the BCNS certification program, the BCNS Board of Directors has adopted the following procedures to allow individuals to elevate complaints concerning the conduct of a certificant or candidate.

In the event a certificant or candidate violates or does not meet the BCNS code of ethics, certification rules, requirements and/or policies, the BCNS may reprimand or suspend the individual, revoke certification or deny certification.

The grounds for sanctions under these procedures may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Violation of failure to meet established BCNS Code of Ethics, rules, requirements and/or policies.
- Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude under federal or state law in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for, nutrition science.
- Gross negligence, willful misconduct, or other unethical conduct in the performance of nutrition services for which the individual has achieved CNS and/or CNS-S certification.
- Fraud, falsification or misrepresentation in an initial application or recertification application for certification.
- Falsification of any material information requested by the BCNS.
- Misrepresentation of CNS and/or CNS-S status.
- Cheating on any certification examination.

Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the certificant or candidate in appropriate situations. Individuals initially bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the actions taken where appropriate.

Complaints

Complaints may be submitted by any individual or entity. Complaints should be reported to the BCNS in writing and should include the name of the person submitting the complaint, the name of the person the complaint is regarding (along with other relevant identifying information), a detailed description of factual allegations supporting the charges and any relevant supporting documentation. Information submitted during the complaint and investigation process is considered confidential, and will be processed in accordance with BCNS’s confidentiality policy. Inquiries or submissions other than complaints may be reviewed and processed by the BCNS Board or Executive Administrator at its discretion.
Upon receipt and preliminary review of a complaint involving the certification program, the Executive Administrator, in consultation with the president of the Board of Directors, may conclude, at his/her sole discretion, the submission:

- Contains unreliable or insufficient information, or
- Is patently frivolous or inconsequential

In such cases, the Executive Administrator and Board president may determine that the submission does not constitute a valid and actionable complaint that would justify bringing it before the Board for investigation, and a determination of whether there has been a violation of substantive requirements of the certification process. If so, the submission is disposed of by notice from the Executive Administrator to its submitter. Preliminary review will be conducted within 15 business days of receipt of the complaint.

Complaint Review

For each complaint that the Executive Administrator concludes is valid and actionable, an investigation is undertaken into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand or corroborate the information provided by the submitter.

The President appoints a Review Committee, subject to subsequent approval by the Board, of three or more individuals, who may or may not be members of the Board to investigate and make an appropriate determination with respect to each such valid and actionable complaint; the Review Committee may review one or more such complaints as determined by the Board. The Review Committee initially determines whether it is appropriate to review the complaint under these Procedures or whether the matter should be referred to another entity engaged in the administration of law. The timeline for responses and for providing any additional information will be established by the Review Committee. The Review Committee may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by other members of the Board or by Board and/or BCNS staff or legal counsel. The Board exercises general supervision over all investigations. The certificant or candidate whose conduct is at issue will also be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint. Responses must be submitted within 10 days of receipt by the certificant or candidate.

Both the individual submitting the complaint, and the certificant or candidate who is the subject of the investigation (or his or her employer) may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The Review Committee, or the Board on its behalf, may at its discretion contact such other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

All investigations and deliberations of the Review Committee and the Board are conducted in confidence, and they are conducted objectively, without any indication of prejudgment. An investigation may be directed toward any aspect of a complaint, which is relevant or potentially relevant. Formal hearings are not held, and the parties are not expected to be represented by counsel, although the Review Committee and Board may consult their own counsel.

Members of the Review Committee will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the activities of the committee.
Determination of Violation

Upon completion of an investigation, the Review Committee recommends whether the Board should make a determination that there has been a violation of policies or rules. When the Review Committee recommends that the Board find a violation, the Review Committee also recommends imposition of an appropriate sanction. If the Review Committee so recommends, a proposed determination with a proposed sanction is prepared under the supervision of the chair and is presented by a representative of the Review Committee to the Board along with the record of the Review Committee’s investigation.

If the Review Committee recommends against a determination that a violation has occurred, and the Board concurs, the complaint is dismissed with notice to the certificant or candidate, the certificant or candidate’s employer (if involved in the investigation), and the individual or entity who submitted the complaint, where appropriate. The Board reviews the recommendation of the Review Committee based upon the record of the investigation. The Board may accept, reject, or modify the Review Committee’s recommendation, either with respect to the determination of a violation, or the recommended sanction to be imposed. If the Board makes a determination that a violation has occurred, this determination and the imposition of a sanction are promulgated by written notice to the certificant or candidate, and to the individual submitting the complaint, where appropriate, if the submitter agrees in advance and in writing to maintain in confidence whatever portion of the information is not made public by the Board.

In certain circumstances, the Board may consider a recommendation from the Review Committee that the certificant or candidate who has violated the certification program policies or rules should be offered an opportunity to submit a written assurance that the conduct in question has been terminated and will not recur. The decision of the Review Committee to make such a recommendation and of the Board to accept it is within their respective discretionary powers. If such an offer is extended, the certificant or candidate at issue must submit the required written assurance within 30 days of receipt of the offer, and the assurance must be submitted in terms that are acceptable to the Board. If the Board accepts the assurance, notice is given to the certificant or candidate’s employer and to the submitter of the complaint if the submitter agrees in advance (in writing) to maintain the information in confidence.

Sanctions

Any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the Board upon a certificant or candidate whom the Board has determined to have violated the policies and rules of its certification program(s). Although the sanction applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the member and deterrence of similar conduct by others:

- **Written reprimand to the certificant or candidate**;
- **Suspension of the certificant or candidate for a designated period**; or
- **Termination or denial of the certificant or candidate’s credential**.

Verification of this information will be made available only after any appeal has either been considered or the appeal period has passed.

Reprimand in the form of a written notice from the Board normally can be sent to a certificant or candidate who has received his or her first substantiated complaint, depending on circumstances. Suspension can be imposed on a certificant or candidate who has received two substantiated complaints, depending on circumstances.
Termination can be imposed on a certificant or candidate who has received two substantiated complaints within a two-year period, or three or more substantiated complaints, depending on circumstances. The Board may, at its discretion, impose any of the sanctions, if warranted, in specific cases.

Certificants or candidates who have been terminated will have their certification revoked and may not be considered for BCNS certification in the future. If certification is revoked, any and all certificates/diplomas or other materials requested by the Board must be returned promptly to the BCNS.

**Appeal**

Within 30 days from receipt of notice of a determination by the Board that a certificant or candidate violated the certification program policies and/or rules, the affected certificant or candidate may submit to the Board in writing a request for an appeal.

Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the Board establishes an appellate body consisting of at least three, but not more than five, individuals. This appeal committee may review one or more appeals, upon request of the Board. No individual privacy to the confidential material submitted to the Board may serve on the appeal committee; further, no one with any personal involvement or conflict of interest may serve on the appeal committee. Members of the appeal committee may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the activities of the committee.

The appeal committee may only review whether the determination by the Board of a violation of the certification program policies and/or rules was inappropriate because of:

- Material error of fact, or
- Failure of the Review Committee or the Board to conform to published criteria, policies, or procedures.

Only facts and conditions in the materials submitted to and considered by the Board for its determination are considered during an appeal. The appeal will not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. Legal counsel is not expected to participate in the appeal process, unless requested by the appellant and approved by the Board and the appeal committee. The Board and appeal committee may consult legal counsel.

The appeal committee conducts and completes the appeal within 90 days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Written appellate submissions and any reply submissions may be made by authorized representatives of the member and of the Board. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the appeal committee. The decision of the appeal committee either affirms or overrules the determination of the Board, but does not address a sanction imposed by the Board. The decision of the appeal committee, including a statement of the reasons for the decision, is reported to the Board.

The appeal committee decision is binding upon the Board, the certificant or candidate who is subject to the termination, and all other persons.
Resignation

If a certificant or candidate who is the subject of a complaint voluntarily surrenders his or her certification(s) at any time during the pendency of a complaint under these procedures, the complaint will be dismissed without any further action by the Review Committee, the Board, or an appeal committee. The entire record will be sealed and the individual may not reapply for certification. However, the Board reserves the right to communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the general nature of the complaint to a government entity engaged in the administration of law, and to refuse future application for certification by the subject of the complaint. Similarly, in the event of such resignation, the Board will notify both the certificant or candidate’s employer and the person or entity who submitted the complaint, of the date of resignation and that the complaint has been dismissed.

Credential Maintenance

Purpose

BCNS supports the ongoing professional development of its certificants in nutrition science. The mandatory recertification process provides certificants with the opportunity to demonstrate the retention, reinforcement and expansion of their knowledge and skills pertaining to new advances as well as state of the art information over the full spectrum of nutrition science and nutrition care. Recertification also provides encouragement to, and acknowledgement for, participation in ongoing professional development activities and continued learning. To support this purpose, the recertification requirements require continuing education and professional activities that enhance ongoing professional development, recognize learning opportunities, and provide a process for both attaining and recording professional development achievements.

Rationale

To ensure the proficiency of CNS and CNS-S certified individuals, the Board requires that each CNS and CNS-S certificant participate periodically in continuing nutrition education (CNE) to refresh existing knowledge and skills, and to acquire knowledge and skills pertaining to new advances as well as state of the art information over the full spectrum of nutrition science and nutrition care.

The 5-year time period established for recertification is based on both the scope of issues that face nutrition care professionals and the Board’s belief that new practices, research, and information are introduced in the field with enough frequency that professional development activities should be conducted routinely so that certificants remain current with best practices and emerging knowledge.

To maintain use of the CNS and CNS-S credentials, certification must be renewed every five (5) years.

Requirements

The BCNS strictly adheres to the standards of maintenance requirements for certification. It is the responsibility of the certificant to comply with all procedures and deadlines in order to maintain their credential.

All certificants renewing their BCNS credential must:
• Earn and record 75 CEUs on the Recording of Earned Continuing Education Credits form in the Recertification Application
• Submit the Recertification Application with corresponding fee(s)
• Remit payment of the $200 recertification fee
• Maintain certificates of attendance for two years after submitting the application. May be asked to provide for auditing purposes.
• Sign the CNS responsibility statements included in the Recertification Application

The Recertification Application including the Recording of Earned Continuing Education Credits form is available on the BCNS website at NutritionSpecialists.org.

Recertification by Continuing Education Hours

After initial CNS or CNS-S certification is obtained, continuing education hours may be accrued and used for recertification. The continuing education hours must be obtained between the date of initial certification or previous recertification and the date that the certification application is submitted.

Documentation of the continuing education hours must be on the Record of Earned Continuing Education Credits form. Certificants are required to report (e.g. name of program, name of the program sponsor, date of program, number of CEUs, and the location of the event) earned continuing education hours no later than the end of the CE cycle. Continuing education attendance should be listed in chronological order starting from the date of initial certification, or previous recertification, to the present. Continuing education hours must be obtained within the five year reporting cycle.

Continuing education hours received before initial certification was earned will not be accepted. Certificates of attendance may be required in order to substantiate the application and should be maintained for a period of two years after the application is submitted.
Qualifying Recertification Activities

CNE includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>NOTATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation as a learner in a professional and structured educational activity that is related to nutrition and nutrition care.</td>
<td>Attendance at teaching activities offering continuing medical education (CME) or other continuing professional education (CPE) that are recognized by professional organizations, e.g., medicine, pharmacy, nursing, dietetics or other health professions organizations and societies. The nutrition content of the activity must be equal to or greater than 50%. The number of CNE credits is equal to that offered by the sponsor of the activity. Attendance at classes and teaching activities offered in association with nutrition educational opportunities hosted by provider organizations. The number of CNE credits will generally be equal to 1 credit per hour of instruction. Nutrition courses at a US regionally accredited college or university. Each semester hour of a course taken for credit is eligible for 15 CE credits (e.g., a 3-credit course is 45 hours of classroom instruction, thus 45 CNE credits.) Audited courses are eligible at 8 CE credits for each semester hour. Other learning activities approved by the BCNS Credentials Council. The activity must be primarily educational in nature, the presentations of scientific quality, evidence-based, and representative of a balanced discussion of the topic, with nutrition content equal to or greater than 50%.</td>
<td>Courses may be taken in person or online. Training classes and activities with the primary purpose of the promotion of the sale of medical, nutritional or other products, or that promote certain aspects of nutrition but lack scientific quality (e.g., sound methodology and statistical analysis, lack of objectivity or balance) are not eligible for CNE credits. Documentation of CNE will consist of the Recording of Earned Continuing Education Credits form found on the website. Certificates of attendance, transcripts, or other evidence of participation may be requested if you are audited or upon request of the Credentials Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching nutrition courses at a US regionally accredited college or university or foreign equivalent institution. A Maximum of 50 CNE credits can be earned in this category</td>
<td>Such courses are eligible for 1 CNE credits per lecture hour. Documentation of eligible teaching will consist of a letter describing the course and the number of lecture hours taught by the submitting CNS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoring or co-authoring books and articles in the field of nutrition. Maximum of 50 CNE credits can be earned in this category</td>
<td>Advanced level professional book or textbook</td>
<td>40 CNE credits. Professional review article or book chapter that is published in a peer-reviewed journal or in an advanced professional book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorship. Maximum of 50 CNE credits can be earned in this category</td>
<td>Editor-in-chief of a professional nutrition journal</td>
<td>25 CNE credits per annum Associate editor of a professional nutrition journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing and Chairing or Co-chairing a scientific session. Maximum of 50 CNE credits can be earned in this category</td>
<td>Organizing and Chairing or Co-chairing a scientific session at a professional meeting</td>
<td>2 CNE credits, if the nutrition content of the activities is equal to or greater than 50%. Documentation of Organizing and Chairing or Co-Chairing a scientific session will consist of a letter describing the activity, including the sponsor of the activity, subject content and number of CEs offered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Limitations

Credential maintenance is intended to assist practitioners with increasing their skills, knowledge, and competence while also ensuring compliance with the BCNS Code of Ethics. This process does not, however, warrant or guarantee competency, accuracy, or any particular result, but, rather, participation in the process helps demonstrate the practitioner’s commitment to providing the highest quality nutrition science services through continuous education and professional development.

The BCNS acknowledges that not all sources or types of continuing professional education contribute equally to professional development. To maximize the quality and relevance of continuing professional education earned by certificants, BCNS provides a detailed list of approved activity types. This ensures that certificants participate in quality continuing professional education activities that are relevant to their jobs and directly tied to the examination content outline.

Recertification Application Processing

The BCNS will email certificants a recertification reminder approximately six months prior to their recertification date, however, it is the certificants responsibility to be aware of and comply with recertification requirements. The expiration date of the certification cycle is printed on the certificants’ certificate.

At the end of the certification cycle, the certificant is required to submit the recertification application, accompanied by supporting documentation (Recording of Earned Continuing Education Credits form) and pay the recertification fee. The recertification application must be emailed no later than the CNS/CNS-S Certificate expiration date. Certificants should allow four weeks for processing recertification applications. A late fee will be imposed for late recertification applications.

Incomplete Recertification Applications

Recertification applications are considered incomplete if any of the required information is missing and/or illegible or the corresponding fee is not included.

Certificants will be notified at least once via email that the recertification application is incomplete and what must be done to complete the application. This notice will include a deadline for response.

If the certificant does not respond in a timely manner, notification will be sent to inform the certificant that the recertification application will not be processed. The certificant will be notified of the consequences for failing to recertify.

Recertification applications must be complete before they are processed and approved.

Annual Fee

For a certificant to ensure that he/she remains in good standing certification must be renewed every five (5) years and BCNS annual fee must be paid annually. BCNS has an annual fee of $100 which is due by December 31st of each year for the upcoming year, commencing the year after certification is awarded. Certificants may pay this fee online.
Failure to Recertify

Recertification is mandatory for all certificants. After a period of five (5) years, or one reporting CE cycle in which a certificant fails to maintain the CNS/CNS-S credential, the certificant’s status is listed as “Inactive” for a maximum period of one year. A certificant must complete the Intent to Reinstate Application, pay the reinstatement fee of $100, and obtain the required number of CEs in order to reinstate the credential.

Certificants recertifying from inactive status must also complete a Recertification Application and remit the corresponding fee.

If the certificant does not comply with the restoration requirements within the maximum period of one year, the Board will revoke the CNS/CNS-S credential. Subsequent to revocation, an individual who wishes to regain active CNS/CNS-S status must meet the eligibility requirements currently applicable for initial certification and retake the examination.

Audit Process

In order to maintain the credibility and integrity of the certification process, the BCNS reserves the right to verify information supplied by, or on behalf of, a certificant. All recertification steps and corresponding documentation will be reviewed by BCNS certification staff to ensure that all recertification requirements are met. If selected for a review, the certificant will be asked to submit documentation substantiating recertification eligibility.

Certificants may randomly be selected for review. An individual selected for review will be required to submit verifiable documentation for each activity listed on the Recording of Earned Continuing Education Credits Form. It is recommended that certificants retain all records for at least two years following the cycle end date.

If credit for any program or activity is denied as a result of the review, the certificant will be given 90 days to report additional hours to resolve the deficiency. The certificant will remain authorized to use the CNS/CNS-S designation during this 90-day period.

If the deficiency is not resolved within the 90-day period, a deficiency notice will be sent. If the deficiency remains unresolved, the individual will no longer be certified and will not be authorized to use the CNS/CNS-S designation.

Recertification Appeals

Appeals regarding recertification eligibility or status must be submitted in writing to the Executive Administrator within thirty (30) calendar days after notification of the adverse decision. The candidate must submit the appeal in writing (email is acceptable), and explain in detail: 1) The nature of the request and the specific facts and circumstances supporting the request, and 2) all reasons why the action or decision should be changed or modified. The candidate must also provide accurate copies of all supporting documents. The Executive Administrator reviews the appeal within 15 days. If the issue can be resolved at the staff level, the Executive Administrator makes a determination and will notify the BCNS Board of the result. If the Executive Administrator cannot resolve the issue, the appeal will be referred to the Board of directors. The decision of the Board of directors is final.
Retired Status

A CNS/CNS-S credential holder in good standing might want to relinquish their active status due to retirement. To apply for retired status, the candidate must:

- Be a current CNS in good standing
- Have renewed the CNS at least once
- Be fully retired and no longer earn primary remuneration for practicing nutrition science.

To apply for a retired status, the candidate must submit the Retired CNS/CNS-S Application to the BCNS.

Retired credential holders do not need to report continuing education. Retired credential holders must use the "Certified Nutrition Specialist-Emeritus" or "CNS-E" designation. The discounted annual emeritus fee of $25 is required and due by December 31st of the prior year.

Individuals granted the CNS-E status may use the CNS-E or Certified Nutrition Specialist-Emeritus after their name, in correspondence, publications, speaking engagements and other public mentions to indicate their status as a Certified Nutrition Specialist at the time of their retirement from nutrition science. CNS-E designees may not use the CNS designation without the Emeritus suffix, and may not portray themselves as a current CNS.

Reactivation from Retirement Status

Individuals who become CNS-E have the following options to reactivate their CNS:

- If the Intent to Reinstate application for CNS reactivation is made within three (3) years of the last date of being a CNS in good standing, the individual may submit the required number of continuing education units in the preceding three years to reactive the BCNS under the recertification policy.
- If more than three (3) years has passed since the last date of being a CNS in good standing, or the requirements to reinitialize are not met, the individual must meet current eligibility requirements, remit the qualifying application and fees, and achieve a passing examination score.
Miscellaneous Certification Policies

Intellectual Property

All examination materials are the sole property of the BCNS. Examinations are securely administered to candidates for the sole purpose of testing a qualified candidate in a single discipline for which an application for certification has been made.

Ownership of the Mark and Logo

The certification mark and logo are the property of the BCNS. Permission to use the certification mark or logo is granted to credentialed persons at the discretion of the Board of Directors, for permissible uses only.

Use of the Certification Mark

After receiving official notification of the CNS or CNS-S designation, the credential may be used as long as certification remains valid and in good standing. Individuals may not use the CNS or CNS-S credential until they have received specific written notification that they have successfully completed all requirements, including passing the examination and documenting the specified experience.

Certificants must comply with all recertification requirements to maintain use of the credential.

Certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation “Certified Nutrition Specialist” or “Certified Nutrition Specialist-Scholar” subject to compliance with the policies and procedures, as may be revised from time to time.

Proper Use of Credentials

After meeting all eligibility requirements and passing the examination, individuals may use their credential(s) in all correspondence and professional relations. The certification mark(s) may be used only as long as certification is valid.

Individuals who have met the certification standards established by the Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists are authorized to use the following certification mark in communications and marketing materials:

1. The Certified Nutrition Specialist® mark may not be altered or changed - neither cropping, nor color, nor removal or addition of markings or text.

2. The Certified Nutrition Specialist® mark should either be capitalized completely or capitalization should be used on the first letter of each word.

   Correct Use:
   John Doe is a CERTIFIED NUTRITION SPECIALIST® professional
   John Doe is a Certified Nutrition Specialist® professional
Misuse:
John Doe is a certified nutrition specialist® professional

3. The ® symbol should always be used immediately after Certified Nutrition Specialist® to indicate trademark status. Once the mark has registered, the ® symbol may be used in lieu of the ® designations.

Correct Use:
Certified Nutrition Specialist®

4. Certified Nutrition Specialist® certificants may not own or use an e-mail address or internet domain name that includes the Certified Nutrition Specialist® mark.

Correct Use:
http://www.janedoenutrition.com
janedoenutrition@hotmail.com

Incorrect Use:
http://www.janedocecertifiednutritio暖心specialist.com
jdcertifiednutritio暖心specialist@mail.com

5. Certified Nutrition Specialist® certificants shall not use the Certified Nutrition Specialist® mark in connection with Google’s Adwords Program, keywords, metatags or any other programmatic devices or tools designed to cause Internet users to visit a particular site or sites, or to otherwise direct, steer or channel Internet traffic.

Confidentiality Procedures

The BCNS is committed to protecting confidential and/or proprietary information related to applicants; candidates; certificants; and the examination development, maintenance, and administration process. Confidential materials include, but are not limited to: an individual’s application status, personal applicant /certificant information, examination items, answer sheets, examination forms, and individual examination scores.

Information about a candidate/certificant is only released to that candidate/certificant unless release of the information is authorized in writing by the individual or is required by law. Personal information submitted by applicant /certificants with an application or recertification application, including results of any background check, is considered confidential. Personal information retained within the applicant /certificant database is kept confidential. Examination scores are only released to the examination candidate as required by law unless a signed release is provided in writing by the candidate or the candidate consents to a score release through the application process.

Applicants for certification are required to read and acknowledge a confidentiality statement as part of the application process.

Release of Information

The names of certified individuals are not considered confidential and may be published by the BCNS. Aggregate examination statistics (including the number of examination candidates, pass/fail rates and total number of certificants; never to include item level data) will be made available upon written request.
(hardcopy or electronic) to the BCNS. Aggregate examination statistics, studies and reports concerning applicants/certificants will contain no information identifiable with any applicant/certificant. Application status, information about whether or not an individual has taken the examination and score information will not be released. Examination scores are released only to the examination candidate unless a signed release is provided in writing to the BCNS by the individual or is required by law.

**Document Management**

BCNS retains all examination forms, examination development documents, examination results, examination items, active examination application information and active applicant/candidate/certificant data permanently. All confidential materials are retained in a secure manner as required by BCNS’s security and document management policies.

## Code of Ethics

### Preamble

The Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists (BCNS) is a nonprofit credentialing Board for nutrition specialists (CNS/CNS-S). The Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) is formal recognition for nutrition care professionals who have met rigorous and demanding eligibility requirements, including postgraduate education, subsequent supervised practice in professional nutrition and demonstration of a depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate for effective practice in the profession of nutrition. The Certified Nutrition Specialist-Scholar (CNS-S) is formal recognition for nutrition care professionals who have met rigorous and demanding eligibility requirements, including postgraduate educations, subsequent experience in the nutrition industry, research, academia, writing or clinical practice, and demonstration of authored nutrition papers, texts, research, and patents.

The ethical obligations of the nutrition science professional include a commitment to continuous growth and development, professionalism across disciplines, and the highest standards of patient/client nutrition care. This serves to clarify to current and future certificants, and to those served by certificants, the nature of the ethical responsibilities held in common by its certificants. All individuals certified by the BCNS are required to adhere to the code of ethics.

### Purpose of the Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists Code of Ethics

The nutrition science professional has an obligation to demonstrate actions that reflect values, ethical principles, and ethical guidelines. The Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists (BCNS) code of ethics sets forth these values and principles to guide conduct. It clarifies the social contract that dictates the profession’s responsibilities to the patient/client, the public and the profession; and upholds the fundamental principle that the paramount purpose of the nutrition professional’s services shall be to benefit the patient/client.
Code of Ethics, Principles and Interpretative Guidelines

The following ethical principles are based on the core values of the Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists, and apply to all BCNS certificants. Guidelines included for each ethical principle are a non-exhaustive list of behaviors and situations that can help to clarify the principle. They are not meant to be a comprehensive list of all situations that can occur.

A CNS/CNS-S that is clinically practicing nutrition care agrees to adhere to the following code of ethics, principles and interpretative guidelines:

- Foremost, do no harm. ACNS/CNS-S consciously avoids harming behaviors or missions, embodies high ethical standards and adheres to all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations in the choices he or she makes.

- ACNS/CNS-S places service, and the health and welfare of other persons before self-interest, and conducts oneself in the practice of the profession so as to bring honor to oneself, peers and to the nutrition science profession.

- A CNS/CNS-S respects and understands that he or she is a health care professional dedicated to providing competent and scientifically sound nutritional and other appropriate care within their own scope of practice, with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights.

- A CNS/CNS-S employs his/her best good faith efforts to provide unbiased information and facilitate understanding to enable the patient/client to make informed choices in regard to all recommended plans of care or assessment. The patient/client should make his or her own determination on such recommendations and assessment. A CNS/CNS-S shall not mislead patients into false or unjustified expectations of favorable results of treatment.

- A CNS/CNS-S upholds the standards of professionalism, and is honest in all professional interactions. A nutrition science professional will additionally be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about unethical behavior. These include policies and procedures created by BCNS, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, supervisors, agencies and other professional organizations (see BCNS Disciplinary and Complaint Policy).

- A CNS/CNS-S upholds the standards of professionalism and commits to performing his/her duties competently, safely and ethically. Drug and alcohol abuse will not be tolerated by the BCNS. Any person discovered using alcohol or drugs in a professional practice will be subject to discipline, including certification revocation (see BCNS Disciplinary and Complaint Policy).

- ACNS/CNS-S respects the rights of patients, clients, colleagues and other health professionals, and safeguards patient/client confidence, trust and privacy in accordance with the law. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, being familiar with and carrying out all HIPAA compliance requirements.

- A CNS/CNS-S commits to the study, application and advancement of scientific knowledge, continues to seek nutritional and related health education, and makes relevant nutrition science information available to patients/clients, colleagues and the public. They also obtain consultation, and recognize the talents of other health professionals when indicated, referring patients/clients to appropriate health care providers when their care requires services outside the scope of practice of a CNS.

- ACNS/CNS-S values his or her responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.

- A CNS/CNS-S truthfully and accurately states one's credentials, professional education and experiences. CNS and CNS-S may be used as a post-nominal credential. The Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists does not recognize "Board-eligible," and such nomenclature is to be avoided.

A CNS-S that is not clinically practicing nutrition care agrees to adhere to the following code of
ethics, principles and interpretative guideline

- ACNS-Supholds the standards of professionalism, and is honest in all professional interactions. A nutrition science professional will additionally be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about unethical behavior. These include policies and procedures created by BCNS, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, supervisors, agencies, and other professional organizations (see BCNS Disciplinary and Complaint Policy).

- A CNS-S upholds the standards of professionalism and commits to performing his/her duties competently, safely and ethically. Drug and alcohol abuse will not be tolerated by the BCNS. Any person discovered using alcohol or drugs in a professional practice would be subject to discipline, including certification revocation (see BCNS Disciplinary and Complaint Policy).

- ACNS-S respects the rights of clients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and safeguards client confidence, trust, and privacy in accordance with the law. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, being familiar with and carrying out all HIPAA compliance requirements.

- A CNS-S commits to the study, application, and advancement of scientific knowledge, continues to seek nutritional and related health education, makes relevant and relevant nutrition science information available to colleagues and the public, obtains consultation and recognizes the talents of other health professionals when indicated.

- ACNS-S values his or her responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.

- A CNS-S truthfully and accurately states one’s credentials, professional education and experiences. CNS-S may be used as a post-nominal credential. The Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists does not recognize “Board-eligible,” and such nomenclature is to be avoided.

- A CNS/S that is clinically practicing nutrition care / not clinically practicing nutrition care agrees to adhere to the following Code of Conduct:
  a) A CNS/CNS-S should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. A CNS/CNS-S should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients’ interests primary and protects clients’ interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients’ interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.
  b) A CNS/CNS-S should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.
  c) A CNS/CNS-S should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, A CNS/CNS-S should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when a CNS/CNS-S relates to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)